

PDSD NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE
PERSONNEL & DOCUMENT
SECURITY DIVISION

A NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW CHANGES.

Happy New Year! PSDS is excited about what new challenges and developments await us in 2011. As you'll read more about in this newsletter and in future updates, we continue to work on establishing the new electronic personnel security folder system (eSec) and the electronic delivery of background investigations (eDelivery) from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). We will put through some corrections and new updates to the web-based Security Entry Tracking System (webSETS) to meet the needs of our customers.

We are anticipating a significant increase in the number of requested background investigations as OPM establishes the new periodic reinvestigation timeframes for Public Trust positions. The new December 2010 version of the SF86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions, will soon be implemented at USDA. Valerie Ramirez will serve as the coordinator between OPM and USDA on this effort.

We are working to cut down on administrative delays by carefully monitoring incoming requests for errors. We appreciate the noticeable improvement made by many of our Agency POC's in their AD-1187 submission packages and webSETS updates in the past few weeks!

We have several staff changes to report. Susan Gulbranson, former Chief of PSDS, has left USDA for a position with Customs & Border Protection (CBP). John Loveless is serving as the Acting Chief for PSDS on a 90-day detail. Carrie Moore has been selected for a promotion at the GS-14 level and she is currently serving as the Acting Chief for the Personnel Security Branch on a 90-day detail. Opal Jones was selected for a promotion at the GS-11/12 level as a Personnel Security Specialist. More staff announcements to come as we fill the remaining vacancies.

We look forward to another productive year. Best wishes in the New Year to all of you!

PDSD Staff

Departmental Management (DM)

Office of Homeland Security &
Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)

Personnel & Document Security Division
(PDSD)

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webSETS Data Entry & Accuracy

The web-based Security Entry & Tracking System (webSETS) went live in 2008. Since this time, Agency points-of-contact (POCs) have been responsible for updating portions of the system to track new investigation requests and creating new records for non-fed employees.

Prior to submitting a new Request for Personnel Security Services (AD-1187) package to PDSD, webSETS must be updated. New records must be created for Applicants or Contractors if one does not currently exist. The Employee Details screen should have completed Place of Birth (POB) fields. The Security Package screen must have the Form Type, Employee Tasked, Received by POC, and Email Address fields completed (unless the request is for reciprocity). The Entry on Duty (EOD) screen is only used to track Advance Fingerprints and investigations on Low Risk positions.

Please ensure the Sensitivity Level on the Employee Details screen is accurate. Update the Position Management system as needed to ensure the correct level is shown automatically in webSETS. An error in this field will affect the accuracy of some of the reports in webSETS.

Agency POC's will receive a reminder when webSETS has not been properly updated. Subsequent requests may be rejected. If you have any questions about webSETS, please refer to the written guidance or contact Carrie Moore at carrie.moore@dm.usda.gov.

webSETS Access Procedures

1. Submit the **webSETS User Request & Acknowledgement** form signed by the MAPO or primary Agency POC. The user must have a need to enter the system in their official duties and have a minimum Moderate Risk designation and equivalent investigation.

2. User is tasked by PDSD to their agency **AgLearn** POC to complete webSETS training within 30 days. Certificate of completion is faxed to PDSD.

3. User receives the **Rules of Behavior** from PDSD to sign and fax back.

4. User receives the **"Welcome to webSETS"** email from PDSD with their username and guidance.

5. User contacts their agency Security Officer (IT) for a password.

webSETS ACCESS ISSUES: PASSWORDS

You must contact the Security Officer (IT) for your agency to obtain a new password or to have a password reset for any of the NFC applications, including webSETS. Although PDSD is the only office authorized to approve all access to webSETS, **PDSD cannot assist with passwords outside of DM employees.** We do not have the authority to do so.

If you need the name of your Security Officer, our Security Officer, Stephen Milinovich, should be able to assist you. NFC does not release the list of Security Officer names for each agency to anyone who is not a Security Officer. Please email Stephen at stephen.milinovich@dm.usda.gov.

Please reference pages 4-7 in the webSETS manual found at: <http://i2i.nfc.usda.gov/Publications/SETS/SETS.pdf> for general information.

Reciprocity: When to use it and How to request it



Reciprocity: Simplify and streamline the investigative and adjudicative process

For fitness determinations, reciprocal recognition of prior fitness and suitability determinations is required, within certain parameters, by Executive Order (E.O.) 13488 as of January 2009. The prior investigation must meet or exceed the level of investigation required by the subject's current position. The prior investigation must have been adjudicated favorably. If this cannot be determined, the prior investigation cannot be used. And finally, the subject must have no break in service since the favorable determination was made. With regard to contractor employees, if the individual has stopped working on a federal contract, this is deemed to be a break in employment. If the agency obtains new derogatory information, the agency cannot grant under reciprocity and they must initiate a new investigation. See E.O. 13488 at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-1574.pdf>.

For suitability determinations, reciprocity requirements under 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 731 were updated in January 2009. Reciprocity applies where a person previously was investigated at a level that meets or exceeds the level required for the new position, was determined suitable under 5 CFR part 731 or equivalent, and has been serving continuously (no break) for at least one year. See OPM Federal Investigations Notice (FIN) 09-06 at <http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2009/fin09-06.pdf>.

For reciprocal recognition of existing security clearances, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) put out guidance in two memos dated December 12, 2005 (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/othergov/reciprocal.pdf>) and July 17, 2006 (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/othergov/reciprocal071706.pdf>). The prior clearance must be a final clearance, and not a temporary or interim clearance. The reinvestigation submission must be current. For example, for a Top Secret clearance, a previous investigation up to seven years old may be accepted provided the reinvestigation package was submitted within the five year deadline and the reinvestigation is underway. If the agency obtains new derogatory information, the agency cannot grant under reciprocity and they must initiate a new investigation. This does not eliminate the need for a suitability determination for new federal employment.

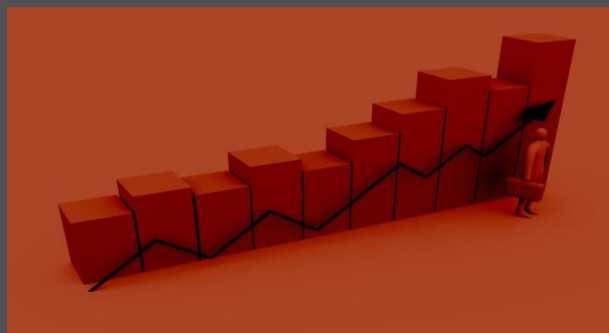
Verifying Prior Determinations...

The Agency POC must ensure that reciprocity can be used based on the guidance above. Utilize the Central Verification System (CVS) to verify prior investigations and their favorable adjudication dates. If CVS is not updated, submit the Interagency Verification form to the previously granting agency (see PDSD website at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/forms.htm>). The Library section in OPM's Secure Portal has a phone/fax directory.

AD-1187's and webSETS Entries for Public Trust and National Security requests...

Select "Reciprocity" under Type of Action. Include the full SSN next to the name. Select the appropriate Position Designation for the new position. Leave the Type of Investigation section blank. Under the Remarks section, enter the information you confirmed regarding the prior investigation. You can also attach copies of the CVS printouts or Interagency Verification form. Ensure a record exists in webSETS and complete the Employee Details screen. Since no investigation will be requested, the Security Package screen will remain blank.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



PDSD STATS

Total Investigation Requests	Total Completed Adjudications	Total Clr Granted via Reciprocity
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2010

2563

2967

78

2009

3407

2604

51

2008

2094

2608

58

2007

1935

2385

40

Q. What is an Interim clearance?

A. An Interim security clearance is an initial eligibility determination, in exceptional cases, that is based on a review and assessment of information contained in the applicant's Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF86) and a favorable Advance NAC.

Q. How is an Interim clearance requested?

A. On the AD-1187, select the "Interim" box under Type of Action along with any other action required. Include a statement for the interim request on the AD-1188, Justification form.

Q. What investigation is required?

A. In addition to requesting the initial investigation, PDSD will request an Advance NAC from OPM. The AD-1187 package should include a copy of the SF86 for review by PDSD.

Q. What if the subject is foreign-born?

A. Citizenship must be verified before any clearance is granted. The Agency POC must attach favorable results from e-Verify or a copy of the subject's naturalization certificate to the AD-1187 package for PDSD to verify with USCIS (may take up to 20 business days).

Q. What if the spouse is foreign-born?

A. The legal status of a spouse (or cohab) in the U.S. must be verified. The Agency POC must attach a copy of the immigration documentation to the AD-1187 package for PDSD to verify with USCIS (may take up to 20 business days).

Q. When can an Interim request be denied?

A. An Interim request can be denied if the justification does not present an immediate need or if the SF86 or Advance NAC presents derogatory issues that must be resolved in the fully completed closed investigation.

FORMS PROCESSING:

Common Questions



Review all e-QIP forms for accuracy!

Medical Release

The Medical Release is not required to be submitted when using the SF85P, Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions.

It will only be used by OPM if an agency submits the supplemental form, SF85P-S, through an agreement with OPM. The OPM Investigator will not conduct any medical checks on an SF85P.

Some individuals have questioned why they are being asked to complete the medical release. Agencies can instruct subject's of investigation that they DO NOT need to complete this release.

AD-1187 packages submitted to PDSD for Public Trust investigations should no longer include the Medical Release.

Fingerprint Charts

Some agencies are receiving the incorrect fingerprint charts, FD 258 instead of the SF 87 for example, from their employees. If this occurs, you do not need to ask the employee to complete new prints. Some employees work in remote areas and it is not always feasible to mail out fingerprint charts.

OPM understands this issue. Just have your forms processor put on a sticky note (or something of the sort) saying that the card needs to be scanned in as an SF87. The individuals at OPM who scan the FP's can easily tell the scanner to change the form type.

New SF86 & Updated Guide

The updated INV15, *Requesting OPM Personnel Investigations*, is now available on the OPM-FIS website. The new version of this document includes updated information on the 2010 SF86 and the FY11 OPM-FIS product line. Please ensure all personnel involved in processing forms in e-QIP have this updated material. The document can be found at:

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/resources/INV15Dec2010.pdf>

Dec 2010 Version of the SF86

The December 2010 version of the SF86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions, which now includes branching questions, was implemented by OPM on December 31, 2010. The new version will be released for agency implementation in a phased approach. OPM will be working with Valerie Ramirez, PDSD, to begin use of this form at USDA. OPM will conduct an "open enrollment" orientation with the e-QIP users in January 2011(dates on right) through an Open House with FIS Agency Training and Oversight in Crystal City, VA.

A webinar will be provided a later date.

SF86 TRAINING DATES

January 12

January 13

January 25

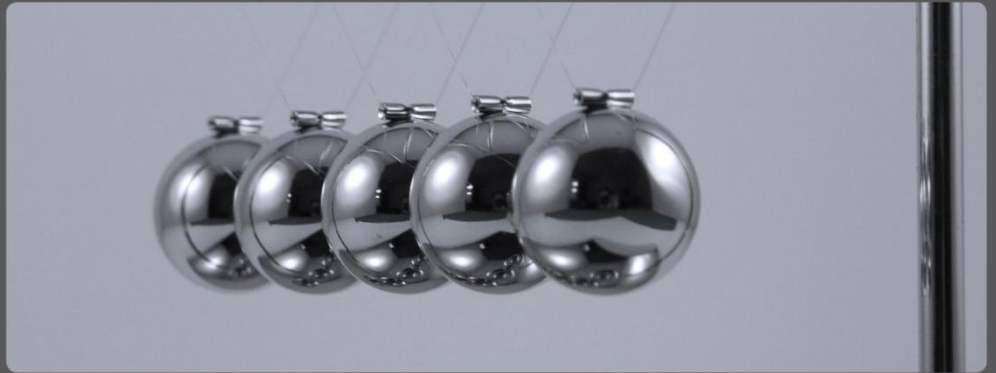
January 26

January 27



PERSONNEL SECURITY TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

PDSD is continuing to work with Rural Development on creating a system to start storing personnel security folders electronically (eSec) that will also automate adjudication workflows and retrieve closed background investigations from OPM via e-Delivery. We are pending the testing phase. More details to come in the Spring newsletter.



Using technology to advance our processes and customer service.

webSETS Enters Phase 4

We've come a long way since webSETS went live in 2008, but we still have improvements to make! This year, we will focus on correcting some minor system errors and adding some new reporting functions. We would like to see some new tracking tools for interim clearance requests and a new periodic reinvestigations report for Public Trust positions once the final regulations are announced by OPM. Agency POC's are encouraged to submit requests for possible additions to the system to Carrie Moore at carrie.moore@dm.usda.gov.

All Agency POC's will soon be contacted to review and revalidate the need for all users who are currently authorized to access webSETS for their agency. Each webSETS user is required to have a minimum of a Moderate Risk position designation and appropriate level of investigation that has been favorably adjudicated.



Proper Position Designation

Proper position designation is the key to requesting and conducting the proper level of investigation. Agencies are encouraged to begin/continue the process of reviewing their positions against the new Automated Tool.

This training outlines how the Automated Position Designation Tool is used to appropriately designate the risk and sensitivity levels of all Federal covered positions as designated in section 731.106 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

The PDT can be found on the FIS Website:

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/resources/position/index.aspx>

OPM Training Available

OPM is offering Automated Position Designation Tool training at their training site in Arlington, VA on February 7th and March 7th.

To sign up for this training, please email Agency Training and Oversight (ATO) at e-QIP_Training@opm.gov for a registration form.

In order to support the transition to the new Fiscal Year 2011 product line, OPM-FIS has updated the Position Designation Automated Tool (PDT). It aligns position sensitivity and risk with the correct form and investigation type for that position. The PDT is now Web-based; it no longer needs to be downloaded in order to use.



REINVESTIGATIONS

PLAN AHEAD TO ENSURE DEADLINES ARE MET

Agency POC's are encouraged to utilize the **Periodic Reinvestigations** reporting tool in webSETS to plan for their yearly reinvestigations budget and taskings for cleared personnel.

Top Secret clearances must be reinvestigated every five years from the date of the last closed investigation (not the clearance granting date).

Secret clearances must be reinvestigated every ten years from the date of the last closed investigation.

Public Trust reinvestigations timeframe to be announced in 2011.

CVS Training

Central Verification System

OPM is offering CVS training at their training site in Arlington, VA. This two-day course (9am-4pm) is designed to teach new agency users:

- how to navigate through the CVS application;
- how to use the system in compliance with Federal rules and regulations;
- why correct CVS usage is important to the reciprocity of security and suitability determinations; and
- how to find and use the CVS guidance provided by OPM; and
- how to report and maintain clearance, polygraph, and HSPD-12 data.

To sign up for this training, please email Agency Training and Oversight (ATO) at e-QIP_Training@opm.gov for a registration form.

For 2011, the following dates are planned so far...

☐ February 10-11: PDSD will be sending several employees to these training sessions if you are local and would like to join us.

☐ March 10-11

Common Q&A Form Errors

Q
A

What attachments are required when submitting a form in e-QIP?

All release pages, must be attached, including resume (fed, not a reinvestigation), OF 306 (as needed), and once the 2010 SF86 is implemented, the credit release.

Q
A

What are common errors with the release pages?

The release pages must be signed using the subject's proper name at birth and all handwritten information must be completed (Date of Signature, DOB, and SSN). Any cross-outs must be initialed by the subject.

Q
A

Are complete mailing addresses required on the questionnaire?

Yes, all agency POC's who are reviewing the questionnaires prior to submitting the forms to PDSD must ensure the subject has entered complete mailing addresses for education, employment, personal references, court actions, etc.

Q
A

Does the resume need to match the information on the questionnaire?

Yes, the information shown on the resume, such as home address, education, and employment, must match the information entered into e-QIP. This works both ways. If an employment is listed on the resume, but not on the questionnaire (or vice versa), OPM will reject the request if a correction is not provided.

Q
A

My subject goes by different names, how should it appear on the questionnaire?

The name provided on the OF 306, questionnaire, and signed on the release pages must be the LEGAL name that is currently used and they must match. For example, if a female has married, but has not legally changed her last name, the maiden name must be shown.



LEADER OF THE PACK

Each newsletter, PDSD is giving a shout out to one of our Agency POC's who is going above and beyond in providing excellent personnel security assistance to both their agency and PDSD.

In this issue, the award goes to....(drum roll, please)...Kim Reid with FAS! Kim may be fairly new to USDA, but she is certainly not new to personnel security. She has taken control of the FAS national security program with her knowledge, determination, and organizational skills....she keeps all of us on our toes :) Keep it up Kim!

WHAT IS HOLDING UP MY ADJUDICATION? WE ADDRESS A VARIETY OF ISSUES DEVELOPED DURING THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS, FROM FINANCIAL PROBLEMS TO ISSUES WITH ALCOHOL OR ILLEGAL DRUGS. WE ALSO HAVE TO ADDRESS OUTSTANDING CHECKS, SUCH AS ON CLAIMED EDUCATION DEGREES AND CITIZENSHIP.

HERE'S A SAMPLE OF HOW THINGS STACK UP

2010

2009

CREDIT ISSUES
REQUIRING
ADDITIONAL INFO

150+

166+

CITIZENSHIP ISSUES
REQUIRING
ADDITIONAL ACTION

200+

215+

OUTSTANDING
CURRENT
EMPLOYMENT
CHECKS

480+

338+

OUTSTANDING
EDUCATION
CHECKS

169+

207+

UPDATED INFO FOR PDSD

Our website address has changed! Please visit us at: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/>.

On our website you'll find forms, reference material and all of the previous PDSD Bulletins and PDSD Newsletters, along with contact information for our office and out in the field.

You'll notice "OHSEC" in our address line now. PDSD falls under the Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Coordination. We still receive mail addressed to OSS/PDSD or (even older) OPPM/PDSD. **Please make the necessary corrections!**

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